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SOURCE Zdrowie Publiczne, Vol LXVI, No 5-8, 1950.MEASURES TO IMPROVE HEALTH CONDITIONS IN BULGARIA

The Communist government has taken a series of measures to raise the health and sanitation level of the Bulgarian people and to combat mortality. Before 9 September 1944, health appropriations amounted to only 2-3 percent of the entire national budget. In 1947 they rose to 6-6.8 percent.

A law was passed in 1946 providing for 3 months' paid leave and free hospital treatment for expectant mothers. Children up to 15 years of age are also entitled to free care to hospitals and sanatoria. The law contains provisions facilitating the opening of maternity clinics, day nurseries, and kindergartens. The raising of large families is encouraged through grants and other benefits.

The number of maternity clinics has increased from 26 to 412. The number of births attended by midwives has doubled. Sixty-one new tuberculosis sanatoria and six camps for children threatened with tuberculosis have been opened. For the first time in Bulgaria night ^[sic] sanatoria have been established to treat chest diseases of workers. The number of beds for tubercular patients has increased 110 percent, the number of factory physicians 125 percent.

* A State Social Security Administration, which provides workers and employees with medical assistance, has been established. The number of dispensaries has grown from 17 before 9 September 1944 to 153. In 1948 alone these dispensaries treated 7 million cases and gave physical checkups. The number of hospitals has increased 20 percent, hospital beds 35 percent, and special hospital wards from 134 to 410.

Following the nationalization of spacious country villas, workers could be sent there to enjoy rest in health resorts. The number of beds available in these resorts has increased sevenfold. Bulgaria's health resorts now provide housing and rest facilities for 300,000 workers each year. The first Bulgarian State Research Institute for Physical Therapy and Health Resorts has been established.

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The state provides substantial funds for the equipment of health resorts, the construction of baths, medicinal springs, etc. In 1946, 16 million leva were appropriated for this purpose, 300 million in 1947, 400 million in 1948, and 600 million in 1950. The number of rural health centers has increased 28 percent. A total of 142 health institutions have been set up, while another 155 are under construction.

The results of the above measures have been considerable. The birth rate has increased and mortality has diminished, especially among children. In fact, child mortality has decreased over 30 percent during the last 4 years.

The number of contagious disease cases has been reduced by one third, and mortality caused by these diseases has been reduced two thirds. Malaria cases also show a considerable decline. It is expected that the construction of hospitals, clinics, and other health establishments will be doubled during the second half of the Five-Year Plan, as compared with the number in 1948. By the end of the Five-Year Plan, medical personnel will be increased 170 percent as compared with 1948, dentists 112 percent, and hospital male nurses 115 percent. A school to train male nurses will be established. The number of midwives will be 130 percent higher than in 1948, the number of nurses 287 percent, and of children's nurses 556 percent. The number of hospital beds will be 126 percent greater by the end of the Five-Year Plan than in 1948.

The USSR has supplied large quantities of medical and pharmaceutical products and equipment for laboratories and hospitals.

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